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Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

Report of the President of the Council on consultations held with the Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

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I. Introduction

1. At its substantive session of 1997, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1997/66 of 25 July 1997 on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations. In paragraph 16 of that resolution, the Council requested its President to continue to maintain close contact on those matters with the Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and to report thereon to the Council.

2. At its fifty-second session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 52/73 of 10 December 1997, in paragraph 17 of which it requested the Council to continue to consider, in consultation with the Special Committee, appropriate measures for coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system in implementing the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

3. Taking into account the above-mentioned resolutions, the President of the Economic and Social Council is of the view that the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations should continue to strengthen measures of support and formulate additional programmes of assistance to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Most of these Territories are islands, small in size and population, geographically isolated and vulnerable to natural disasters, such as hurricanes and cyclones. They are also relatively undeveloped economically, and are thus particularly dependent on external assistance. The President therefore echoes the General Assembly's call to the specialized agencies, other organizations of the United Nations system, and international and regional organizations to examine and review conditions in each of the Territories so as to take appropriate measures to accelerate progress in the economic and social sectors of the Territories.

4. In accordance with the terms of Council resolution 1997/66, the President of the Council maintained close contact with the Chairman of the Special Committee during the period under review, and on the basis of those contacts and in the light of related developments, submits to the Council the observations set out below with a view to facilitating Council consideration of the present item.

5. During the year, members of the Council and the Special Committee followed closely the work of their respective bodies relating to the item. The President considers it both useful and essential that such contacts and cooperation continue to be maintained and strengthened to mobilize the maximum possible assistance to the peoples of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories.

II. Support by specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to non-self-governing territories

6. According to the information provided by specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, during the period under review a number of specialized agencies and organizations have continued to extend assistance to the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories in response to the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the Council and the Special Committee. A number of organizations have extended or formulated such programmes of assistance from within their own budgetary resources, in addition to their respective contributions as executing agencies of projects funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the primary provider of assistance.

7. A number of assistance projects have continued to be funded by UNDP, in close collaboration with other agencies and organizations of the United Nations system.

A. United Nations Development Programme

8. UNDP maintains programmes of technical cooperation with the following seven Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Caribbean: Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, and Turks and Caicos Islands, along with Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles. Although the extent and focus of these programmes vary from one Territory to another, they are all in general executed in conformity with UNDP guidelines for the implementation of the Successor Programming Arrangement and relevant decisions of the UNDP Executive Board, particularly those concerning the focus and allocation of assistance under each programming cycle, as well as with relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

9. The new thrust of UNDP's Successor Programming Arrangement under the fifth cycle and in the current programme cycle, with emphasis on the promotion of sustainable human development, continues to be guided by

decisions 95/22 and 95/23 of the UNDP Executive Board, which together endorse the following areas for pursuing technical cooperation:

(a) Social development and poverty eradication;

(b) Job creation and sustainable livelihoods;

(c) Governance, participation and the empowerment of women;

(d) Protection of the environment and natural resource management.

10. Cooperation between UNDP and the Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Caribbean has been influenced also by the decisions and outcomes of various United Nations conferences, including the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (1994), the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the World Summit for Social Development (1995), and the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995).

11. The focus of UNDP's technical cooperation programmes with the Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories is determined in full consultations between the government authorities and UNDP. The programmes therefore reflect the established mandates of UNDP and the development priorities, needs and concerns of the Territories.

Programming arrangements

12. Continuing resource constraints faced by UNDP, particularly during the recent fifth cycle and in the current programme cycle, have severely restricted the ability of UNDP to respond more fully to the technical cooperation needs of the Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Caribbean. A common feature of these Territories is their relatively high per capita income levels and the overall high levels of human development that they have achieved. Despite these achievements, however, the Territories are confronted by a lack of capacity at both the institutional and human resource levels. Their small human resource base precludes any economies of scale in the areas of training and human resource development, and also makes the relative cost of administration, government and physical infrastructure, especially in archipelagic Territories, unusually high. Traditionally high rates of emigration, inspired by a variety of factors, serve to compound an already difficult human resource problem for many dependent territories, making them heavily reliant on an expatriate labour force.

13. The openness of the economies and societies of small Non-Self-Governing Territories further compound the difficulties faced by authorities in selecting and applying appropriate and effective policy instruments. Both their economies and their societies are heavily susceptible to external shocks, and are equally vulnerable to the ravages of both natural and environmental occurrences. These endemic weaknesses combine to revalidate a continuing role for UNDP in the provision of timely, focused and effective technical assistance to Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories, consistent with its overall thrust and their priority concerns and needs.

14. UNDP resource limitations have influenced the need to prioritize the allocation of assistance, largely according to the criteria of per capita income, population size and levels of development of recipient countries. As of the start of the current programme cycle (1997-1999), therefore, all the Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Caribbean that maintain technical cooperation programmes with UNDP have attained the status of net contributor countries. Anguilla and the Cayman Islands have been allocated TRAC[1] resources for the current cycle of $147,000 and $66,000, respectively, on a transitional, fully reimbursable basis, in accordance with paragraph 23 of UNDP Executive Board decision 95/23. Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands have each been allocated TRAC resources of $49,000 and $222,000, respectively, on an established, fully reimbursable basis, in accordance with paragraph 21 of the same decision. The Territories with no TRAC are Aruba, the British Virgin Islands and the Netherlands Antilles. Cooperation with all of these Territories will have to place considerable emphasis on resource mobilization and cost-sharing.

15. In addition to their TRAC allocations, some Territories benefit from the Caribbean component of UNDP's Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean. In particular, the British Virgin Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands will benefit from the expanded ongoing regional disaster response and management project. Additional benefits will accrue to the Turks and Caicos Islands under the Support for Policy and Programme Development and Support for Technical Services frameworks. In addition, given its membership in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), Montserrat will continue to benefit, as it did in the fifth cycle, from the Caribbean Multi-Island Programme. So too will Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands, which have also received similar benefits in the past as a result of their associate status with OECS. Access to other facilities, the Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries Programme and the Partners in Development Programme,

could also provide benefits for these Territories. All the Governments and the UNDP country offices that serve them will benefit from the services to be provided by the establishment during the first half of 1998 of the Subregional Resource Facility for the Caribbean. This facility will be based in Trinidad and Tobago.

Other areas of assistance

16. Arising from the provisions of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, a number of initiatives that have been assigned to UNDP for further development and implementation are expected to be fully operationalized in the current programme cycle, and will realize benefits for the Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Caribbean. The Small Island Developing States Information Network and the Small Island Developing States Technical Assistance Programme, conceived to promote and enhance the flow of sustainable development information among small island developing States, and to provide technical expertise in addressing gaps in technical assistance needs through exchanges among small island developing States and between small island developing States and other States, will enhance further the process of integration of the non-independent territories into the global arena. These programmes, whose development began in the latter part of the fifth cycle, are expected to begin to realize tangible benefits for the small island Territories of the Caribbean in the course of the current programme cycle, and will contribute to addressing some of their important development policy concerns. Furthermore, Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories stand to benefit from any additional support to be determined by UNDP for assisting in the implementation of the Programme of Action in the subregion. It is envisaged that this support will be provided in the context of the Caribbean Work Programme adopted by the Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held in November 1997.

17. UNDP resident representatives assigned to some of the Territories have initiated the establishment of focal points within those Governments. This initiative is intended to strengthen dialogue and promote contact between the territories, UNDP and the rest of the United Nations system. An expected benefit will be the increase in awareness among officials and the general public of the territories about the potential for collaboration with the United Nations system. It is also hoped that through such a mechanism UNDP can play a greater role in providing policy advice and guidance, within its areas of competence, to the authorities of the Territories.

18. UNDP has continued to engage in effective policy dialogue with the Governments of several Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories with a view to determining their most critical policy concerns and recommending ways for effectively utilizing assistance provided by UNDP. These functions have been carried out by UNDP resident representatives, who also frequently monitor developments of a social, economic and political nature in the Territories concerned. The formulation of appropriate programmes of technical assistance is informed by both the process of consultations and the ongoing review of conditions within each Territory by UNDP.

19. In addition to its role in all the above-mentioned respects, UNDP also performs the function of maintaining critical liaison and coordination with other agencies of the United Nations system. This function has often proved necessary in the determination of needs and the delivery of assistance to the Non-Self-Governing Territories, particularly with respect to emergencies.

Focus of assistance

20. At its third session, in September 1997, country cooperation frameworks (CCFs) for implementation in the new programme cycle were approved by the Executive Board of UNDP/the United Nations Population Fund for Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands. The Executive Board agreed to postpone the approval of the CCF for Montserrat on account of the continuing volcanic crisis there. Extensions of one year (January to December 1997) of the fifth cycle country programmes for the Turks and Caicos Islands and the Cayman Islands were approved by the Executive Board, also at its third session in 1997. The CCFs for these Territories will be considered by the Executive Board at its second session in 1998. Altogether, these policy documents are set within the context of UNDP's thematic focus areas and the needs and priorities of the respective Governments. Furthermore, country programmes and CCFs set out in analytical terms the policy issues facing each territory from a sustainable human development perspective, along with the details of UNDP strategy and focus of its assistance.

21. Assistance to the Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories under the fifth cycle country programme (1992-1996) had as its principal focus the provision of support for human resource development, capacity-building and institutional strengthening, and environment and natural resources management. With this in view, UNDP's strategy in the current programme cycle has been to continue its

emphasis on providing support in these areas, building upon the outputs of its previous interventions.

22. In the light of the significantly reduced flows of development assistance from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to **Anguilla**, the financing of its cooperation programme during this cycle will come mainly from government cost-sharing contributions. The programme as approved will concentrate on human resource development and environmental management. UNDP will be expected to provide considerable support to the Government in the area of resource mobilization.

23. With regard to the **British Virgin Islands**, although the Territory has received no TRAC allocation for its programme, which will be fully funded from government cost-sharing resources, cooperation in this cycle will concentrate on social development and poverty eradication, with a particular focus on women and children. In addition, some attention will be paid to environment and natural resources management.

24. In the **Cayman Islands**, UNDP will build on the achievements of the support for training and human resource development provided during the fifth programming cycle. Under the CCF to be considered by the Executive Board at its second session in 1998, the main thrust of UNDP support is in the area of governance and capacity-building. Support will therefore be provided for improving fiscal planning and management; public-sector training and staff development; and education planning and management.

25. UNDP's support to **Montserrat**, which presented a special case for assistance during most of the fifth cycle as a result of an ongoing volcanic eruption, initially focused on the development and implementation of policies and programmes in environment and natural resources management and in strengthening institutional capacity in this area. Some of the inputs were directed towards physical planning, liquid and solid waste management, and disaster planning and management, among other things. However, the continuing crisis has necessitated a shift in the direction of external aid to the provision of emergency relief. UNDP, in addition to supporting critical gaps in the emergency phase, has also provided support for longer-term resettlement and development efforts. It is anticipated that this need will continue in much of the current cycle as a consequence of this crisis. These circumstances will require a re-examination by the UNDP Executive Board of Montserrat's net contributor country status on account of the severe adverse impacts on the island's economy and society. At its third session in 1997, the Executive Board endorsed the provision of additional emergency resources for Montserrat. This new support will focus on housing, environmental health and microenterprise development.

26. In the **Turks and Caicos Islands**, technical cooperation has been largely aimed at "direct interventions" with a view to laying the basis for meaningful development in such an economy. In this connection, assistance was granted for the establishment of an investment agency, the creation of a national insurance scheme, improving customs administration and tertiary-level education. In the current cycle, support is envisaged in two broad areas: preparation of an integrated development plan, and sustainable livelihoods and employment creation through assistance linking agriculture and small enterprise development with tourism.

B. International Labour Organization

27. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has two types of activities that are pertinent to the present report: standards-related activities and technical cooperation. Background information is contained in a study prepared by ILO in 1959, entitled "The influence of article 35 of the Constitution of ILO in the application of conventions in non-metropolitan territories", which provides an insight into how Non-Self-Governing Territories are addressed in the ILO Constitution. Under articles 22 and 35 of the Constitution, periodic reports are requested in relation to the application of international labour conventions in such Territories. An illustration of how the ILO supervisory system encompasses such Territories may be found in the most recent report of the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations which is devoted to observations on the application of conventions in Non-Self-Governing Territories, including comments relating to the observance of fundamental ILO conventions, as well as a number of technical standards (some of the territories noted under that section of the report are not the type referred to in United Nations resolutions, but reflect the text of the ILO Constitution and ILO practice as it has evolved over the years).

28. Furthermore, part V of the declaration concerning the aims and purposes of ILO, which forms an integral part of its Constitution, notes that the principles set forth in the ILO Constitution are fully applicable to all peoples everywhere, and that although the manner of their application must be determined with due regard to the stage of social and economic development reached by each people, their progressive application to peoples who are still dependent, as well as to those who have already achieved

self-government, is a matter of concern to the whole civilized world.

C. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

29. Assistance by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the areas of food security, agricultural, forest and fisheries development remain relevant to the small island Territories, which form the large majority of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. FAO contributions to work undertaken by the Commission on Sustainable Development in the area of the sustainable development of small island developing States is also relevant in this regard.

Notes

[1] Target for resource assignment from the core.